

but it is also calculated to appeal to the least fertile undergraduate or coffee house poseur.

it's a logically compelling argument, this appeal to perfectionism; the only defense i can offer is a listing of names:

chaucer, shakespeare, milton, wordsworth, tennyson, browning, yeats,

for starters.

the poete maudit might notice that les fleurs de mal is not a particularly slim volume of verse.

in other words, from the venerable bede to charles bukowski, barring early death or other such impediments, real writers have always tended to write quite a lot.

#### HER FINEST QUARTER-HOUR

i was always crazy about jodie foster although i kind of quit saying much about it after hinckley's letters entered the public domain,

but she was on night watch the other morning with charley rose, who is usually one of the better interviewers,

and this time he kept insisting on asking her to discuss the hinckley experience, even though it was clear they had agreed in advance that it would not be discussed.

twice she told him they'd have to move on: then finally she said,

"i'm afraid if you ask me that question one more time i'm going to have to do something that will embarrass you, like walking out of here."

"no, don't do that!" he said.

dear god, i pray for strength to conduct myself with the selfsame



composure of that (to me still) little girl if i am ever subjected to such a professional level of interrogation.

PROBABLY

the cabbie from the oakland airport to emeryville is a skinny oldtimer who loves magic johnson and drives like he's operating one of those video machines where you can total-out three times before they even begin to subtract serious points.

"what brings you to emeryville, of all places?" he asks.

"it's kind of hard to explain," i tell him, "but it's a form of moonlighting. i teach college and i come up here to grade essays for a testing service."

"do they pay you?"

"a little."

"do they cover your air fare and expenses?"

"yes."

"where they put you up?"

"the durant."

"shee-it, son, thass a nice hotel. now you see why yo' mama made you finish school?"

HOW TOAD IMPROVED UPON HANSEL AND GRETEL  
poisoned breadcrumbs.

— Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA